



# Folk Dance Scene



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## Folk Dance Scene

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*Folk Dance Scene* is published to educate its readers concerning the folk dance, music, costumes, lore and culture of the peoples of the world. It is designed to inform them of the opportunities to experience folk dance and culture in Southern California and elsewhere.

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Full page (6" x 7 1/2")	\$25	\$40	Lake Stevens, WA 98258

*On the cover: Dancers at Statewide 2025 in Arroyo Grande. Photo courtesy of Loui Tucker.*



# Folk Dance Scene

Volume 61, No. 5  
June/July 2025

## Editors' Corner

On the cover we have a picture from Statewide - also reported on page 20.

In Costume Corner Betchen continues research augmented by publications found by her sister: old and new, black and white and color. She ends with a question not resolved by these references in hopes that one of us readers may have an answer.

Dancing with Meaning is an essay by Marc Rayman on researching the songs that we dance to. He presents examples of searches in the linguistics and meanings of lyrics.

We Meet Steve Himel in this recognition of his extensive and various contributions to our recreational folkdance scene.

Discover May Merriment and Poetry corner.  
Be of good cheer!

*Pat Cross and Don Krotser*

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For information about dancing in the area, contact the Federation at the Federation website: [SoCalFolkdance.org](http://SoCalFolkdance.org)

## The Corner

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Gratitude gallops across this column, my final words as president.

The first round of applause is for Statewide chairs, Margaret Lange and Billy Burke. What an overwhelming success! Meticulous planning, community support, talented musicians, flawless teaching, a cast of generous volunteers and oodles of dancers from both North & South all came together for an exhilarating weekend in Arroyo Grande.

Next, a big shout out for the Federation steadfast support team: Dick Oakes for maintaining the website jam packed with history, facts, opinions, biographies, calendar, dance notations and links to other folk related sites; Jay Michtom and Team Scene for publishing (almost) monthly articles, poems and photos that are a joy to read; Marshall Cates for serving as Parliamentarian to keep council meetings legal, Finance Committee Chair to insist that funds are spent wisely and unofficial Keeper of traditions and institutional knowledge; Mindy Belli for accurate accounting. I appreciate the hours you dedicate to keeping accounts and filing required forms!; Margaret Lange for the professionally organized minutes of council meetings; Julith Neff for keeping track of all the ins and outs related to insurance and getting certificates sent to clubs; Bob Altman for digital wizardry that sends membership renewal packages every year; Steve Himel for helping manage council meetings, discretely correcting my errors and quietly making astute suggestions (We miss you in SoCal, Steve!); all the other club leaders, event chairs, officers, committee chairs, volunteers who contribute to the effectiveness of our association. Your hours of volunteer labor enabled the Federation to sponsor satisfying Fall Camps, provide scholarships, and organize events

*The Corner continues on page 19.*

# COSTUME CORNER

## Researching Albania

Before the late 1990s, it had long been impossible to get much information about Albanian costumes and dances, except from the refugee community in southern Italy, which had evolved somewhat on its own. A friend who studied Albanian language kindly passed on to me his copy of a book in Albanian about their costumes, *Veshjet Shqiptare Në Shekuj*, by a woman named Andromaqi Gjergji. Printed in Tiranë in 1988, it is full of tantalizing, poorly printed, black-and-white photos on crumbly yellowed paper. The only color pictures are the three on the cover (*Photo 1, left*).



**Photo 1:** Covers of the original and later editions of Gjergji's treatise on Albanian folk costumes and their origins.

Last year, however, my sister Ann triumphantly brought home to me, from a tour of Albania, a paperback called *Albanian Costumes through the Centuries* (Tirana, 2004)—a full translation of Gjergji's book into English (*Photo 1, right; Photo 2*). (Whew. Albanian is a struggle. Like English, French, Spanish, Greek, Latin, Russian, etc., it is in the Indo-European language family, but has evolved so differently that it is not easy to figure out. At least the title word *veshjet* "clothing, dress" is rememberable, since it's related to English *vest*, *vestment*, etc., through Latin.) The book proved to be a very thoroughly researched treatise, and they even added a new color section at the back.





Fig. 40. Couple of Albanian Tosks (Design from T. Valerio, 1875).



Fig. 42. Shepherd near Tivari in 1878. (see A. Meylan, A travers l'Albanie, etc.).



Fig. 41. Albanians escorting the pledges (painting of Czermak, 1874).



Fig. 43. Albanian women in 1875. (see A. Meylan, A travers l'Albanie etc. Paris 1885).

about the costumes of the 1860s also from two other authors, J. Roskiewicz and F. Kanitz. In his work *Studien über Bosnien und die Herzegovina*, the former presents the costume of Albanian men in the region of Novi Pazar, in the illustration entitled "An Arnaut". There we see that the *fustanella* of this Albanian is short to the knee and that he is wearing a kind of cloak around his shoulders (98, fig.3). F. Kanitz, on his journey in 1864, observed that the Albanian costume extended in Serbia as far as Kamenica and Aleksinac (north of Nis). (Reise in Sud-Serbien...p.34).



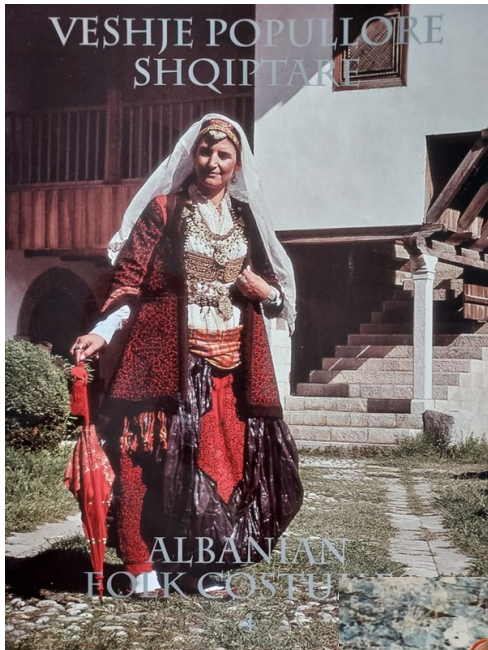
Fig. 44. Wealthy Albanians. Design of F. Fritel in Nouvelle Geographie etc. of E. Reclus, Paris 1876).

**Photo 2:** Old photos and drawings of Albanian costumes reproduced in Gjergji's book. The girls on the righthand page wear coats somewhat similar to those in the Blackstone collection photographed in color in the 2013 UCLA exhibition catalog, **Resplendent Dress**.

Ann also found me another present: Volume 4 of a handsome new set, all in color, of Albanian costumes: **Veshje Popullore Shqiptare: Albanian Folk Costumes** (Tiranë, 2016) (**Photo 3**). These large-format volumes, arranged by geographical area, include a very helpful map (**Photo 4**). They are coming out one at a time over several years, and I wanted that volume because I was trying to research a particular costume from the Mirdite area, in northeastern Albania (**Photo 5**). Fortunately, the discussions in the back are in dual columns, Albanian and English; but unfortunately, it didn't include the needed costume. Each of the volumes, however, is available directly from Albania by post through the internet, and at least a couple of the volumes seem to be available by interlibrary loan from American libraries. I should add that a collection of very handsome full-skirted sleeveless coats of young Albanian girls is illustrated in the exhibition catalog, **Resplendent Dress from Southeastern Europe** (Fowler Museum, UCLA, 2013; pp. 217-27), along with the interesting story of how they were acquired by an American girl nearly 100 years ago.

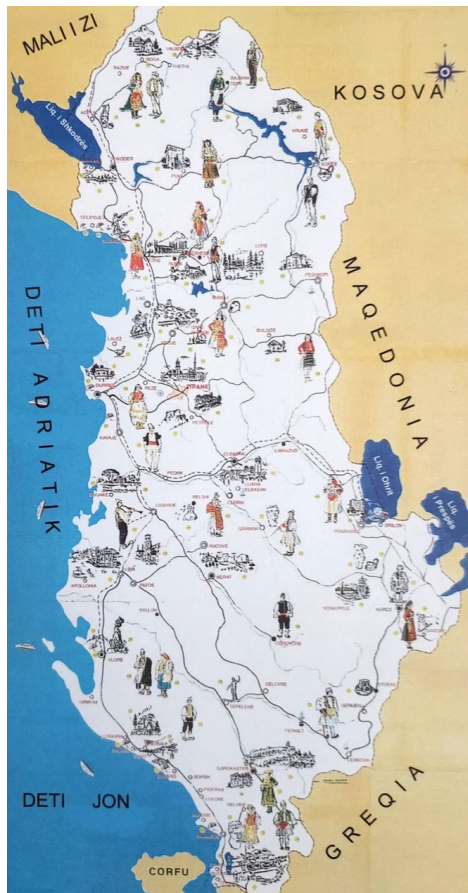
And if anyone knows anything more about the outfit in **Photo 5**, please let me know (via *Scene*)! In many unusual details, it resembles the ornate costume of young women from Mariovo across the border in Macedonia—but it's the wrong color: royal blue, not fire red!

—Elizabeth Wayland Barber



**Photo 3:** The cover of Volume 4 of the elegant new series of large-format color picture books of Albanian folk costume currently being published, one by one, in Tiranë, with dual text in Albanian and English.

**Photo 4:** Map of Albanian costumes, from *Veshje Popullore Shqiptare vol.4*, p.9.



**Photo 5:** Seeking information on this costume with heavy blue fringes on shoulders and apron; from somewhere near Mirdite in Northern Albania.







Save the Date:

31 Oct - 2 Nov, 2025  
for

# Fall Camp

At the lovely Brandeis-Bardin Campus in Simi Valley, CA

We'll enjoy dances taught by  
Catherine Rudin,  
who teaches widely in the Midwest.

Also, we'll learn recent hits from Stockton folk  
dance camp and the Laguna Festival taught  
by dance teachers from California.

Plus, many favorite camp activities,  
such as crafts, star gazing, nature walks, Potluck  
Band, happy hour, dance parties with requests,  
culture corner, and more.

This year, share a room and save money.

Find more information & the registration form  
on [www.fallcamp.com](http://www.fallcamp.com) after June 15

# CALENDAR

## JUNE

- 1 *Turkish Festival*, Shoreline Aquatic Park, 200 Aquarium Way, Long Beach CA 90802. 11 am to 5 pm “delicious Turkish food , all day live entertainment, traditional art and craft vendors and small businesses” <https://www.instagram.com/p/DHRbxijg0m9/>  
socialturkishfest@gmail.com
- 1 *Bruce Hamilton Dance Workshop* -info  
historicalteaanddance@gmail.com registration form <https://historicalteaanddance.org/>
- 7-8 *Downey Greek Food Festival* 10830 Downey Ave, Downey, CA 90241
- 14-15 *Irish Fair and Music Festival*, Wilson Park, 2299 Washington Ave, Torrance, CA 90501  
[www.bigirishfair.com](http://www.bigirishfair.com) (\$30 with some discounts)
- 14-15 *Covina Greek Festival* 20340 E. Covina Blvd, Covina, CA 91724 (626) 967-5524 <https://covinagreekfestival.com/>
- 20-22 *Irvine Greek Fest*, St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Church, 4949 Alton Parkway, Irvine, CA 92604  
<https://irvinegreekfest.com/>
- 20-22 *Ventura Co Greek Festival* St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church, 5575 Santa Rosa Road, Camarillo, CA 93012. Free Parking & 2-minute Shuttle Rides to and from the festival.  
<https://vcgreekfestival.org/>
- 22 *Pontian Glendi at Kypseli* with Adem Ekiz Beskoylu and Ioannis Apazidis. 4 pm at The Tango Room, 4346 Woodman Ave, Sherman Oaks. \$25 Admission includes appetizers.  
[www.kypseli.events](http://www.kypseli.events)

## JULY

- 9 *Laguna Int Dancers Party*—Live music by Sans Frontieres and ice cream social. See ad.
- 18 *Summer Birthday Party* at LIFE Balkan Dancers, Free admission, live music with Bill Cope and friends. LaDanceFit, 10936 Santa Monica Blvd, LA CA 90025. Enter through the back. E-mail worldance1@gmail.com for the Zoom link.

- 18-20 *South Bay Greek Festival* St. Katherine's Greek Orthodox Church 722 Knob Hill Ave, Redondo Beach, CA 90277  
[www.sbgreekfestival.com/](http://www.sbgreekfestival.com/)

## AUGUST

- 3 *Labyrinth Dance Workshop* - info  
historicalteaanddance@gmail.com register on the website <https://historicalteaanddance.org/>
- 3 *Bob Altman and Michelle Sandler's 30th anniversary party*, Clubhouse 5, 24262 Punta Alta, Laguna Woods, CA 92637. 3:30 pm - 8:30 pm Admission is free to all folk dancers, bring a dish for the potluck following the dancing at 7 pm. Live music with Interfolk, Sans Frontieres, and Zimzala. Anyone not a member of Laguna Woods needs to email Marilyn Michael 10 days in advance, with their full name and phone no., for gate access. [marilynmichael829@gmail.com](mailto:marilynmichael829@gmail.com). See ad.
- 9 *Derya Yıldırım and Grup Şimşek* at Zebulon, 2478 Fletcher Dr, Los Angeles, CA 90039 - Anatolian folk with psychedelia, pop and soul influences. 7 pm <https://dice.fm/event/k6b83q-derya-yldrm-grup-imek-9th-aug-zebulon-los-angeles-tickets>
- 22-24 - *Fiesta La Ballona* in Culver City is taking applications from performing groups Email [Fiesta.LaBallona@culvercity.org](mailto:Fiesta.LaBallona@culvercity.org)  
[www.fiestalaballona.org/Home](http://www.fiestalaballona.org/Home)
- 29-31 *Orange International Street Fair*, Aug 29: 5-10 pm, Sat, Aug 30: 10 am – 10 pm Sun, Aug 31: 10 am – 10 pm
- 30- Sept 1 *Long Beach Greek Festival*  
[www.lbgreekfest.org/](http://www.lbgreekfest.org/)

## SEPTEMBER

- 19-21 *Pasadena Greek Fest*  
[www.pasadenagreekfest.com/](http://www.pasadenagreekfest.com/)
- 20-21 *LA Ukulele Festival* <https://losangelesukulelefestival.com/>



27-28 *San Juan Capistrano Greek Fest*  
[www.sjcgreekfest.com](http://www.sjcgreekfest.com)

## NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

May 31, *Scandia Camp Mendocino 2025* will be ONLINE via Zoom. Free! Session 1: 10am PDT - Peter Michaelson will teach new tunes for Group Playing/Allspel. Session 2: noon PDT - John Ole Morken on Norwegian Folk Music Radio Hour. For more information:

[www.ScandiaCampMendocino.org](http://www.ScandiaCampMendocino.org) Questions: Roo@ScandiaCamp.org

June 28-July 5 *Mendocino Balkan Camp* <https://eefc.org/balkan-camp/west-coast/>

July 5-12 *Middle Eastern Music and Dance Camp 2025* Mendocino Woodlands, CA, USA  
[www.middleeastcamp.com](http://www.middleeastcamp.com) email: gamze@middleeastcamp.com

July 20-Aug 3 *Stockton Folk Dance Camp*, Weeks 1 and 2 [https://stocktonfolkdancecamp.org/summer\\_camp/](https://stocktonfolkdancecamp.org/summer_camp/) See ad.

Aug 1-9 *Lark Camp at Mendocino* [www.larkcamp.org/](http://www.larkcamp.org/)  
Sept 11-14 *Camp Nirkoda Ba'Kerem* An Israeli dance and wine tasting adventure! DoubleTree by Hilton, Sacramento, CA <https://nirkoda.com/bakerem>

## OUT OF STATE

June 7 *An Evening of Greek Music and Dance with Dromeno from Greece* Show 7:30 PM Doors 7PM, Kitsilano Neighbourhood Community Hall, 2305 W 7th Ave (at Vine Street), Vancouver, BC V6K 1Y4, Canada General Admission Tickets \$35/ Students \$25 with valid BC Student ID  
[www.vtixonline.com/dromeno/5010/](http://www.vtixonline.com/dromeno/5010/)

June 12-15 *June Camp*, Lake Forest Academy, Lake Forest, IL, with Steve Kotansky, music with Tom Paxton, Ralph Iverson, & Brian Wilson <http://sites.google.com/site/junecampifd>

July 10-13, *New Mexico FD Camp*, Teachers Richard Powers and Petur Iliev, at Montezuma Castle, United World College, Las Vegas, NM,  
[www.swifdi.org](http://www.swifdi.org)

July 11-13 *45th Annual Door County Folk Festival* - in new location in Sturgeon Bay, WI <https://dcff.net>

July 19 *John Filcich's 101st Birthday Party* (replaces *2nd Annual Filcich Folk Dance Festival*), a night of music and dancing with Taman - John Morovich & Talia McGill, and Members of Chubritza. 2116 N Killingsworth St. Portland, OR 97217 <https://www.filcichfestival.com/>



### *Let's Dance!*

The Magazine of International Folk Dance

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Membership application available on line at [www.folkdance.com](http://www.folkdance.com). Pay on-line or send application with check to Marsha Rosenblatt, Membership, 927 Springfield Drive Millbrae, CA 94030

# 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party for Bob Altman & Michelle Sandler

August 3, 2025, 3:30 pm - 8:30 pm

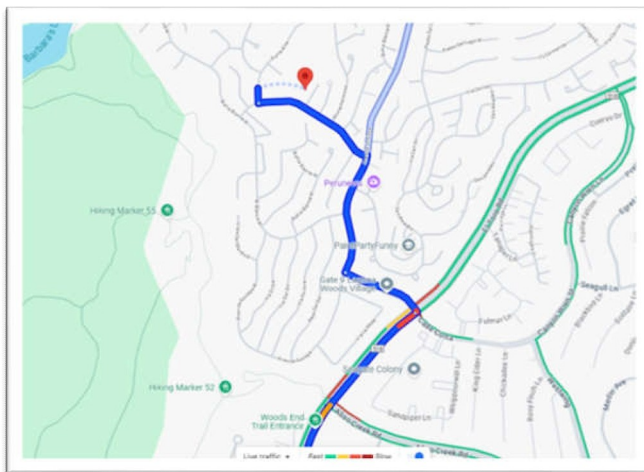
Laguna Woods Clubhouse 5

24262 Punta Alta, Laguna Woods, CA 92637

Bob Altman and Michelle Sandler are throwing themselves a 30th anniversary party in Clubhouse 5, 24262 Punta Alta, Laguna Woods, CA 92637. Admission is free to all Folk Dancers - they just ask that everyone bring a dish for the potluck which will follow the dance at 7 pm.

**Live music with Interfolk, Sans Frontieres, and Zimzala.**

== > Anyone who is not a member of Laguna Woods needs to let Marilyn Michael (marilynmichael829@gmail.com) know 10 days in advance that they are coming, with their full name and phone number, so she can let the guards at the gate know.



# MAY MERRIMENT

## NEVENKA

Nevenka's Concert and Dance Party attracted both younger and older folks to the dance floor at Foshay Hall in Culver City May 10. Beautiful voices and harmonious musical accompaniment mesmerized the audience. The concert program ranged from gentle songs of love to nonsense about a tiny metal shoe to a rousing welcome to spring after winter's icy conditions. On stage and in the audience were former members of Aman and Nama. Following the concert Paula Davis (also an Aman dancer) guided folks unfamiliar with Eastern European rhythms and steps to dance Hasaposerviko, Syrtos, a Devetorka, Pajduška, Pravos.... The pace picked up for Račeničas and the new dancers confidently followed the feet of veteran dancers. How uplifting it is to dance to exquisitely played and sung Balkan music! Nevenka Chorus and the folk dance community look forward to this concert/dance party becoming an annual event!

Nevenka's mission statement:

"It is our passion to bring Balkan music to audiences well-rooted in the genre, as well as to people unfamiliar with the compelling rhythms and striking harmonies of this music. We hope that our performances will help raise awareness and tolerance of other cultures, and promote cultural interchange and understanding through the power of music."

Mission accomplished May 10. Read more about Nevenka and listen to their music at <https://www.nevenka.org/>.

## KYPSELI

While many SoCal dancers were in Arroyo Grande to dance to the music of Chubritza at Statewide, on May 4th the Federation Club, Kypseli, hosted the Greek Rebetiko Trio at the Tango Room in Sherman Oaks and the Mostly Kosher ensemble played Klezmer music for dancing in Beverly Hills.

## FIFTH FRIDAY

Another local folk music ensemble performed in So Cal this month. At two private parties the Fifth Friday

Band provided entertainment to thank volunteers who gave assistance after the firestorm in Altadena. At each event, the band explained the cultural significance of folk dancing and played tunes for listening, then used recorded music for teaching and dancing. This music was a gift to the community, and it has led to a gift to Folk Dancing! Fifth Friday will do an expanded concert/audience participation event at a local yoga school and in the Eagle Rock Public Library in the coming months. The band has documented their presentations with photos and videos that they are willing to share with anyone who wants to spread the word about the benefits of folk dancing to community groups with whom they are associated.

The outreach committee can provide materials and assistance. We invite you to connect us with health fairs and community events in your neighborhood, [info@socalfolkdance.org](mailto:info@socalfolkdance.org).



*Fifth Friday members Toti O'Brien and Ling O'Connor.*

# MEET STEVE HIMEL

---



Steve received the Preserving our Heritage Award at the 2025 National Folk Organization conference.

In his own words . . .

"I started folk dancing accidentally during college in 1966. I had never heard of folk dancing. Prior to that, my only experience with dance was square dancing in gym class when the weather kept us indoors.

I quickly became hooked and attended regularly, helping with all aspects of the group.

After college, my wife and I continued to folk dance. We used to take our newborn daughter along, and she slept on the floor"

Some of what sets Steve apart has to do with the breadth and variety of his contributions to the folk arts, and his lifelong commitment to preserving and promoting folk traditions exemplifies the essence of who he is.

An accidental start to folk dancing turned into more than 50 years of fun, friends, and helping others learn and enjoy folk dancing.

Some of the many places Steve has helped or worked :

- Steve danced with and performed with the Scandia Dancers of Southern California from 1998-2014.
- Laguna Folk dancers, Kolo Festival, San Antonio Festival, Lyrids Festival
- Laguna Festival dealing with registration, printing syllabi & programs, including chairing the event
- Assists with online Stockton Folk Dance Camps
- The National Folk Organization
- The monthly Global Folk Dance Parties
- Online Scandia Camp Mendocino
- Has worked for Folk Dance Scene for over 20 years
- Various positions including President for over 8 years of SnoKing IFD in the Seattle area
- Many of these Zoom dances require a lot of unseen background support from many people so that they run smoothly and Steve is there to provide it.
- Facilitating technical aspects including teaching people to use technology of various types.
- Steve usually works in the background, before and during the events, neither seen nor heard ("been shy all my life" he says).

Some of what sets Steve apart has to do with the breadth and variety of his contributions to the folk arts, and his lifelong commitment to preserving and promoting folk traditions exemplifies the essence of who he is.

An accidental start to folk dancing turned into more than 50 years of fun, friends, and helping others learn and enjoy folk dancing.

In recognition of his remarkable contributions to preserving our folk heritage, we are happy to honor Steve Himmel with the National Folk Organization's Preserving our Heritage Award. His lifelong dedication, leadership, and passion serve as a beacon of inspiration for all who cherish our cultural traditions. His legacy will continue to inspire and enrich others.

*Folk Dance Scene thanks Roo Lester for providing this information.*





# Jim Gold International Folk Tours 2025

Travel, adventure, folk dance, culture

## Eastern Europe-The Balkans

### BULGARIA-Koprivshtitsa Festival (held every 5 years):

**July 29-August 11** Led by Ventsi Milev

Sofia, Plovdiv, Bansko, Veliko Turnovo, Koprivshtitsa

### GREECE and the GREEK ISLANDS: Oct 4-17

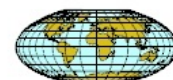
Led by Lee Otterholt, Maroula Konti, guide

Athens, Nauplia, Sparta, Olympia, Delphi, Meteora, Mycenae, Epidaurus. **Greek Island Cruise:** Mykonos, Crete, Rhodes, Patmos, Kusadasi

### TURKEY: Oct 17-31

Led by Lee Otterholt

Istanbul, Ankara, Cappadocia, Pamukkale, Izmir, Kusadasi, Pergamon, Troy, Canakkale, and Bursa



Travel  
broadens  
one!

## Western Europe

### SPAIN: Sept 11-24

Malaga, Ronda, Cadiz, Seville, Cordoba, Granada

## South America

### ARGENTINA: Chile ext: Oct 5-15

Buenos Aires, Salta, Mendoza

### BRAZIL: Nov 3-14

Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, Iguassu Falls



## Middle East

### EGYPT: Feb 20-March 2. 2026

Cairo, Nile River cruise, Luxor, Aswan

### ISRAEL: October 17-28

Led by Lee Friedman and guided by Joe Freedman

Jerusalem, Masada, Tel Aviv, Galilee, Haifa, Safed, Golan Heights.

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497 Cumberland Avenue, Teaneck, NJ 07666 U.S.A.

(201) 836-0362 Email: [jimgold@jimgold.com](mailto:jimgold@jimgold.com)

# DANCING WITH MEANING

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## Exploring the Stories Behind the Songs

One of the many joys of folk dancing for some people (perhaps even you or people you dance with or teach) is learning about the songs we dance to. They can be beautiful, touching, sweet, funny (sometimes intentionally, sometimes maybe not), or interesting or meaningful in other ways. Knowing more about them can enrich the folk dancing experience.

I had a conversation about this recently with my friend Diane Baker, who suggested I write a *Scene* article about some of the ways I've discovered the lyrics, pronunciations, and cultural backgrounds of songs. In this brief article, I can't cover all my methods, but I hope what follows will prove interesting and useful.

I've had many delightful surprises in my research. (Who would have guessed that an Assyrian song for a sheikhani was about Christmas? And how many dances does your group do to a song that features a ditch and a camel or to a song about a teacher and a vampire?) However, my focus here is not on what I learned about songs but rather how I learned about them. Perhaps it will inspire you to conduct your own investigations, whether with the tips I have here or other ways.

Of course, many times teachers will present the translated lyrics, the proper pronunciation, and the background. If they are fluent in English and in the song's language (or have clearly done their own research), little additional work is needed. Nevertheless, I will give one example below where further sleuthing proved worthwhile. Regardless, teachers often do not provide translations (or even summaries) or good pronunciations, sometimes because they don't speak the language. Indeed, some of our community's most beloved teachers present dances with songs in languages they don't speak fluently or even at all.

Among the simplest ways to get more information is

to consult any of our knowledgeable fellow folk dancers or someone else who does know the language and culture. Of course, you don't ask simply for a straight translation; rather, you ask about nuances, question what some specifics in the song mean, delve into idiomatic expressions, propose alternatives to make it sound better to our native-English ears, inquire about cultural or historical connections, etc. I keep track of the languages spoken by people I meet professionally or socially, and that has been a nice resource. It's one of the advantages of living in a multicultural society.

The web offers myriad possibilities, but it is worth keeping in mind that it is a vast and rich source of erroneous information (plus some correct information), so I recommend caution if you care about the accuracy of anything you find. Anonymous or potentially unqualified sources, whether at popular sites like Wikipedia or more obscure ones, may confidently present what looks like the answer you seek, but that doesn't make it correct. It's better if you can question the source, and I'll return to this point several times below. Sometimes I will make Google limit my web searches to sites that end with .edu because academics tend to be more reliable (though not infallible).

If you know the song's name, a web search can locate websites that have lyrics in the original language and in others. If you can find multiple translations (being careful to ensure they aren't simply multiple copies of one translation), that can improve the chances of a good translation. If you don't know the name of the song, you may be able to find it using other websites or apps that will identify songs if you play the music or upload the music file.

Sometimes it requires a little more work, but there are still plenty of avenues to pursue. Web searches may reveal many cultural organizations in the US, diaspora groups, or other social or religious organizations centered on the culture of interest.

(Even if you only find an organization in another country, it's not uncommon for someone there to be fluent in English and so capable of providing help.) My experience is they are thrilled when someone (like me!) with no personal or family ties nor any financial stakes expresses interest in their culture. Scholars also are often happy to share their knowledge, so departments of linguistic or regional studies at universities may be helpful. There are also both social and scholarly public forums dedicated to exchanging linguistic or cultural information.

As an example, when I learned Corlu Aromân from Sonia Dion and Cristian Florescu at Stockton in 2015, I asked them for a translation of the song. Sonia told me they had no idea even what the song was generally about, much less the specific lyrics. I tracked down an Aromanian cultural organization in Connecticut and ended up having a very nice correspondence with them. I sent them the music, and they were happy to translate the song. That direct connection afforded me the opportunity to get clarifications of rough spots in the translation. (Sonia and Cristian were delighted when I offered the final translation to them.) In addition, my correspondent provided some background on the cultural significance of the song.

In another case, when Ahmet Lüleci taught Elo Dino at Stockton in 2016, he acknowledged he didn't understand the Kurdish lyrics but said he thought it might be about "a guy named Elo from a town called Dino." I discovered the Kurdish Community of America, based in Minnesota. They kindly sent me a summary of the song I had sent them and answered my specific questions about it and about the Kurdish chief (who was not from Dino) it extols. That worked so well, they also helpfully translated Helef for me. (And Ahmet was happy to have the explanations I passed along to him.)

Once again, those are simply examples. I've had successes with many other songs (and provided translations to other master teachers).

Quite recently, Diane Baker sent me the music for a dance to ask what I knew about the song. She was

careful enough to recognize she had not learned it from an authoritative source, and since the dance name, Veleshko, was generic, not specific to the song, there wasn't much to go by. She suspected it was Macedonian, but her Bulgarian friends thought it was Serbian.

I uploaded the MP3 to [aha-music.com](http://aha-music.com), one of many sites that identify music, and it gave me the name of the song. However, recognizing that it's easy to find inaccurate information or to be otherwise misled (sometimes even by myself), I prefer to use more than one method, especially when doing so is quick and easy. I found the name of the singer in the metadata for the MP3 file. (Most music apps, including iTunes for Windows and Apple's Music, will display the metadata.) I next searched for his recordings and quickly found the name of the song that way too. I then readily located multiple YouTube videos of the singer performing the song, reconfirming that it was the right one. Although I eschew all social media including Facebook, I discovered there were a few videos on Facebook and elsewhere of other folk dancers doing the dance and suggested Diane contact them to ask if they knew more about the source.

At the same time, I asked ChatGPT for help. Now before I go on, I should caution that all large language models (a kind of artificial intelligence), of which ChatGPT may be the most famous, are (or at least should be) well known for providing false information, known as "hallucinations." It's both common and easy for users to be lulled into an invalid impression of communicating with an authoritative, reliable source. I have caught ChatGPT quite a few times in factual errors, illogical inferences, internal inconsistencies, and other mistakes. (In fact, ChatGPT once told me, "You have a great eye for detail... You're definitely logical and careful, and I appreciate the precision of your thinking. If I ever make a mistake or jump to a conclusion too quickly, I welcome your scrutiny." And, yes, I know ChatGPT's comments about me may have been hallucinations too!) However, careful interrogation can be very illuminating and constructive, and I consider it

necessary if you care about the correctness of an answer.

I gave ChatGPT the name of the song and the singer. It recognized the piece as traditional Macedonian and provided the lyrics in Macedonian and in English. I followed up with several questions to gauge its reliability.

By the way, as a separate check, I entered ChatGPT's Cyrillic lyrics into Google Translate. Now of course no automated translation is perfectly reliable, especially with songs that may have idiomatic expressions, take poetic license, or rely on specific cultural references, and my experience with such translators supports that. Nevertheless, Google Translate and other online translators are so fast and easy, they can be handy when used carefully and in combination with other resources. To start, it identified the language as Serbian, the same mistake Diane's Bulgarian friends made. That's not especially surprising because Macedonian and Serbian are South Slavic languages and share a great deal of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. In the end, I didn't find its translation as satisfying as ChatGPT's, but it was close enough that it boosted my confidence in what I had already found.

My total investment in researching the music Diane sent me: less than 10 minutes. So, this doesn't have to be burdensome.

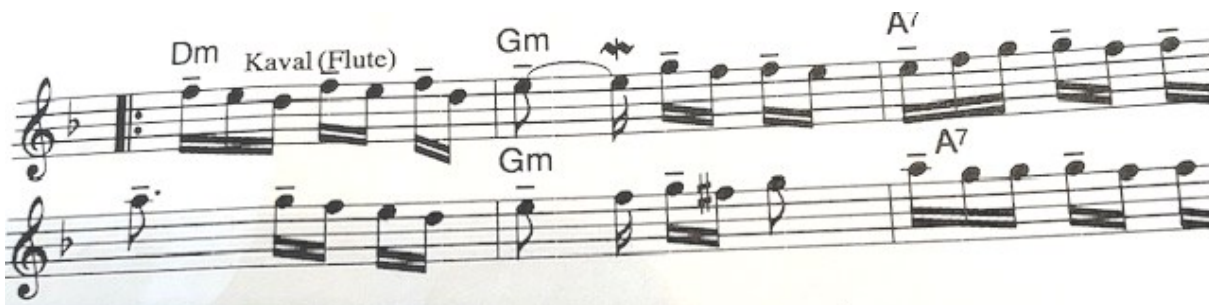
Even when master teachers provide English lyrics and some background, we can still learn more of interest for ourselves or those we dance with. For example, when Tineke van Geel taught Bingeol at Stockton in 2019, her syllabus had a nice translation

and even a couple of sentences about the poet who wrote the lyrics. I subsequently discovered the nice detail that the poet is shown on Armenian paper currency worth about \$25. I also consulted with someone fluent in both English and Armenian and knowledgeable about the culture. He gave me some helpful historical context for the beautiful song. In addition, he explained to me where the lyrics had been translated literally at the expense of the poetic meaning.

Now there can be disadvantages of providing your fellow dancers with background on the songs. When I teach a dance in Jan's and my Foothill International Folk Dancers group, I don't always give all the background the first time. After all, our primary objective is to have fun dancing and socializing, so I try to avoid talking too much at the expense of teaching the dance. Our group was very fond of the lovely Armenian dance Gorani until I got around to explaining the song. A few of our regulars found the story so sad, they actually preferred not to do the dance anymore! (It amused me about five years later when one of those dancers happened to come across a video of the dance and said, "This is beautiful. We should do it." Apparently both the dance and the sadness associated with it had faded away.)

Once again, this article isn't meant to be a comprehensive guide, but I hope my examples illustrate how a few simple methods can help uncover stories behind the music we dance to and enhance the wonderful experience of international folk dancing. And you might even discover still another song about teachers and vampires.

-- Marc Rayman

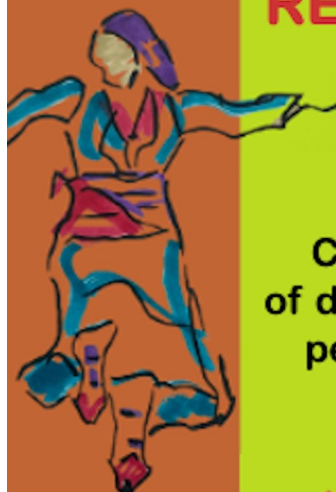




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**Hosted by the Laguna International Dancers**

**All Laguna Woods Village residents and their guests are welcome.**

# POETRY CORNER

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## The Accountant's Desk

On the accountant's desk  
A pencil, a pen and  
A Tuff Stuff stick eraser...  
A couple of clicks  
And fresh Tuff Stuff appears

Pencil, pen, eraser carefully aligned  
Speak order, speak quiet alacrity...  
Tuff Stuff equipped to rub out a mistake  
Pencil to correct it, pen to make it permanent

Three tools on the accountant's desk  
Ready to correct chaos and confusion,  
One careful entry at a time  
All the way down the page  
To a final, cross-footed conclusion.

– Camille Dull



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*The Corner continued from page 3.*

for socializing and dancing together throughout the year. We have bounced back from Covid and I applaud your service!

Thank you all for being patient as I learned how to carry out duties expected of the President.

Elections will take place June 22 at the quarterly council meeting. Please send a note to [info@socal.org](mailto:info@socal.org) to receive the zoom link and participate in Federation decisions.

See you soon as Past President on the dance floor: July 9 summer party with Sans Frontières in Laguna Woods, July 18 summer party at LIFE Dancers in West LA, September 27 in Ojai for Day of Dance and October 31 – November 2<sup>nd</sup> at Fall Camp in Simi Valley.

– Diane Baker

# STATEWIDE 2025

## A May Day Festival in Arroyo Grande

Standing ovation is due Margaret Lange and Billy Burke for producing a splendid and satisfying experience for all Statewide festival goers! Every detail was imagined, planned, coordinated and successfully carried out! Eighteen months ago, Billy and Margaret canvassed the central coast to find the ideal venue—Portuguese Hall. In quick succession they arranged



for master teacher Željko Jergan, who brought his talented assistant Arianna Ordway. They complemented the instructional program of lively Croatian dances by engaging Billy himself to teach iconic Mac-



edonian dances. The first helper to volunteer was Toti O'Brien who offered her artistic talent for decorating the hall. She also designed and assembled the origami craft project. Billy called in favors from his



network of colleagues to engage *Chubritza* to play for dancing, and Big Rock Balalaika to entertain festival goers during Happy Hour. He prevailed upon Sherry Cochran to serve as DeeJay Queen throughout the weekend, and arranged for Jean Gorrindo of the Central Coast Country Dance Society to call contras at evening parties. David Heald and the Solvang Village Dancers signed on to perform an ambitious program



of Scandinavian set dances. Margaret took on the task of registration as well as designing artwork for flyers, writing promotional articles, and contracting with the host hotel, Hampton Inn. Additionally, she prepared a detailed description of nearby restaurants, cafes and shops, and researched and wrote a travel guide to recreational opportunities on the Central Coast. Further, she invited Jim Corridan to share the



history and significance of the nearby Dana Adobe (built in 1839 on a Mexican Land Grant) to add a cultural experience to the festival. Margaret also designed the colorful souvenir buttons and ordered “keep cool” bandanas plus handy note booklets to fill the goody bags. Margaret’s daughter, Megan Zottarelli, designed the floral name tags. Arranging for caterers was delegated to Shelley Lawrence, a Bay Osos dancer. (Meals were scrumptious!) Members of the host club, Bay Osos dancers, volunteered to decorate, make coffee, bake, set out refreshments, clean up and much more. Margaret called in favors from local merchants and neighbors to contribute wine, carafes for serving beverages and tasty snacks. She arranged for her friend, Phil Hamer, to close the festival with a bagpipe tune. Billy flew a friend’s wife (a professional videographer) from Hawaii to record dance instruction. Together Billy and Margaret planned and publicized a free Community Dance Party with Maypole Dancing led by Marc Rayman, for Sunday afternoon.

With such thorough advance planning, what could go wrong?

Water! The local water district announced possible contamination of regional drinking water a few hours before attendees began arriving. The directors met the emergency with cool efficiency. Bottled water was brought to the Hall, signs posted. Fortunately, at 2 p.m. an alert sounded to reassure all that the tap water was safe for drinking! The festival continued exuberantly.

Dances taught throughout the weekend included Otezavac, Štiri Snehe, Marice, Katuše Mome Katuše, Ukruševo Ogin Gore, Postupano, Žensko Pušteno, Kukurigupetle (say that 3Xs fast!), Žensko Makedonsko, Žensko Čamče, Grad Se Beli, Škaljarsko Kolo, Staračko Kolo, Sviraj Svirče Drmeša, Kalajkjsko and Kopačka. Željko reviewed Svirčko and Aj Lipo Tije. Arianna gloriously sang a capella, to which Željko joked, “She can sing sometimes” after thunderous applause had subsided.

Following the Saturday morning workshop dancers hustled off to the village for yummy lunches, and perhaps a bit of shopping, then returned to enjoy the complex figures executed by the smiling Solvang Danish Dancers. Everyone was ready for Happy Hour when afternoon workshops concluded. Volunteers set up tables for a festive Mediterranean meal then quickly cleared the furniture for the Saturday evening dance party. John



Filcich led his signature dances, Veliko Kolo and Kokonješte, and waltzed with daughter Jana. Participants commented on how delighted they were to be in the friendly village of Arroyo Grande for the weekend. It felt like a big family reunion with dancers from Northern and Southern California equal in attendance! Thanks, Billy and Margaret and your dedicated team for providing the recreational folkdance community with a heartwarming experience at Statewide 2025! But, wait! There’s more....

Sunday morning featured dance reviews. While dancers ate tasty box lunches with chocolate chip cookies as delicious as homemade, two Maypoles were set up in the hall. Doors

were opened for a free Community dance party. Marc Rayman patiently guided 32 ribbon holders to weave out and in, over and under. The traditional tune was nearly drowned out by laughter. Billy invited everyone to join him on the dance floor for Ve David and similar dances. The local TV station, KSBY, arrived to document the occasion. As the afternoon wound down folks asked when the next community dance would take place. Margaret and Billy provided a gift to the local community as well as to the visiting folk dancers! It took a village to produce such an amazing and successful festival. Let’s shout a cheer to the 2025 Statewide Festival Chairs – hip hip hooray Margaret Lange and Billy Burke and the Bay Osos team!

# CLUB DIRECTORY

Most groups welcome beginning dancers. The groups with an \* below have sessions specifically for beginners.

*For changes, additions, or deletions email [directory@folkdancecene.org](mailto:directory@folkdancecene.org)*

## Federation Clubs

**Bay Osos Folk Dancers:** Tue 11:00-3:00. South Bay Community Center, 2180 Palisades Ave, **Los Osos**. 818-203-5812 [wburke.dance@gmail.com](mailto:wburke.dance@gmail.com) Billy Burke, [BayOsosFolkDancers.org](http://BayOsosFolkDancers.org).

**Cabrillo Folk Dancers:** Tue 7:00-9:00. Balboa Park. Balboa Park Club, 2144 Pan American, **SAN DIEGO**. (858) 459-1336 [gbsham@gmail.com](mailto:gbsham@gmail.com) Georgina, 858-766-1095 [michaelleonardcreditor@gmail.com](mailto:michaelleonardcreditor@gmail.com) Michael-Leonard Creditor, <https://sites.google.com/site/cabrillodancers>

**Cerritos Folk Dancers:** 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Tue 5:00-7:45 Cerritos Senior Center, 12340 South St, **CERRITOS**. (626) 500-5035

[chiangwenli@yahoo.com](mailto:chiangwenli@yahoo.com) Wen Chiang

**Conejo Valley Folk Dancers:** Wed 7:30-9:30. Hillcrest Center for the Arts, 403 W Hillcrest Dr, **THOUSAND OAKS**. [paula.davis@bucknell.edu](mailto:paula.davis@bucknell.edu), Paula, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/265181362778249>

**Fantasy Folk Dance Club:** Sun 3:00 - 7:00. St Thomas Aquinas Church, 1501 S Atlantic Blvd, **MONTEREY PARK**. [vincentyhcheng@gmail.com](mailto:vincentyhcheng@gmail.com) 626-429-9008 Vincent Cheng. Sat 10-noon. Langley Senior Center, 400 W Emerson Ave., **Monterey Park**. (626) 673-2184 Peter Lin

**Folk Dance Center:** Wed 9:30-11:30am, Sat 7-10 . Oasis Wellness Center, 5500 Grossmont Center Dr, **La Mesa**. [jcknappster@gmail.com](mailto:jcknappster@gmail.com) John, [www.folkdancecenter.org](http://www.folkdancecenter.org)

**Int'l Folk Dance Club - Laguna Woods:** Tue 10:00am-12:00. Clubhouse 1, 24232 Calle Aragon, **LAGUNA WOODS**. (949) 939-0604 Marilyn Michael Yurk. First-time dancers call Marilyn for gate clearance. [www.lagunawoodsvillage.com/amenities/clubs/dance-club-international-folk](http://www.lagunawoodsvillage.com/amenities/clubs/dance-club-international-folk)

**Kypseli Greek Folk Dancing:** Occasional Sunday live music events. 310-508-9676 Anne Sirota. [www.kypseli.events](http://www.kypseli.events)

**Laguna Int'l Dancers:** Wed 6:00-8:30 at Clubhouse 2, 24112 Moulton Pkwy, **LAGUNA WOODS**. Fri 1:30-4:00 at Clubhouse 7 24111 Moulton Pkwy, **Laguna Woods**. Sun 6:00-8:00 on Zoom. [leeotterholt@yahoo.com](mailto:leeotterholt@yahoo.com) Lee. [www.lagunainternationaldancers.com](http://www.lagunainternationaldancers.com)

**Narodni Int'l Folkdancers:** Thu 8:00-10:00. Woman's Club of Bellflower, 9402 Oak St, **BELLFLOWER**. (562) 410-6964 [julithilona@gmail.com](mailto:julithilona@gmail.com) Julith Neff [www.narodni.org](http://www.narodni.org)

**Pasadena Folk Dance Co-op:** Fri 7:30-9:30. Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1757 N. Lake Ave, **Pasadena**. **For current info contact:** [www.pasadenafolkdancecoop.org](http://www.pasadenafolkdancecoop.org); 626-808-0361, [info@pasadenafolkdancecoop.org](mailto:info@pasadenafolkdancecoop.org) Mari Werner

**Prescott Int'l Folkdancers:** Sun 2:00-4:00. Prescott Boys & Girls Club, 335 East Aubrey St, **PRESCOTT, AZ**. (928) 925-8995 Dick Weston [Prescott.intl.folkdancers@earthlink.net](mailto:Prescott.intl.folkdancers@earthlink.net). [www.prescottinternationalfolkdancers.org/](http://www.prescottinternationalfolkdancers.org/)

**Rainbow Senior Club:** Sun 2:00-5:00. Joslyn Senior Center 210 N. Chapel Ave, **ALHAMBRA**. (626) 456-1900 [ksun310@yahoo.com](mailto:ksun310@yahoo.com) Kevin Sun.

**Solvang Village Folk Dancers:** Thu & Sat 4:00-8:00. Buellton Recreation Center, 301 2nd St, **Buellton**. 3rd Sat 1:00-3:00. Jensen Square, Corner Alisal & Copenhagen, **Solvang** (805) 688-3397 [dlh4362@gmail.com](mailto:dlh4362@gmail.com) David Heald

**Ventura Int'l Folkdancers:** Tue&Thu 1:30-3:00. 2nd Sun 1:30-3:30 (may change due to conflicts - check with Valerie). Ventura YMCA, 3760 Telegraph Rd, **Ventura**. Non-members check with Valerie first. (805) 746-0884 [dancing.valerie@gmail.com](mailto:dancing.valerie@gmail.com) Valerie Daley. [www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100067987230157](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100067987230157)

**Vintage Israeli Dancing:** One Sat per month 8:16-12:00. Danzmunro World Dance & Fitness Studio (DWDFS), 16733 Ventura Blvd., #13, **ENCINO**. (310) 351-2166 [jrbythec@aol.com](mailto:jrbythec@aol.com) Jim Rothman. [www.vintageisraelidancing.org](http://www.vintageisraelidancing.org)

**West Valley Folk Dancers:** Fri 2:00-4:00. Canoga Park Sr. Ctr. 7326 Jordan Ave. **Canoga Park.** (818) 979-5030. jaymichtom@yahoo.com. Jay Michtom, psw20@icloud.com Paul Waller, WestValleyFolkDancers.org

## **Exhibition Groups**

**Karpatok Hungarian Folk Ensemble:** United Hungarian House, 1975 Washington, **LOS ANGELES.** (805) 341-9640 sissykf@earthlink.net Sissy Keresztes-Fischer. Wwww.KarpatokFolkEnsemble.com

**Krakusy Polish Folk Dance Ensemble:** Wed 8:00-10:00, Fri 7:00 - 9:00, Sat 2:30-4:00. Our Lady of the Bright Mount , 3424 W Adams Blvd, **LOS ANGELES.** (626) 827-7338 elistarr@yahoo.com Elizabeth Romuzga. Wwww.krakusy.com

**Nevenka East European Folk Ensemble:** Contact: Jennifer Jurick 818-519-2034, info@nevenka.org

**Scandia Dancers:** Thu 7:30-9:30. (714) 356-7745 sholzman1@verizon.net Stefanie Holzman

**Westchester Lariats:** Mon 4:00-9:00. Holy Nativity Church, 6700 W. 83rd St, **LOS ANGELES.** 310-913-5736 elizvalla@gmail.com Elizabeth Kane. Wwww.WestchesterLariats.org

## **Associate & Non-Federation Clubs**

**Caltech Folkdancers:** Tue 7:30. Caltech Campus, Dabney Hall, parking on California Blvd. or Throop Church, 300 Los Robles, **Pasadena.** (626) 797-5157 Nancy Milligan. **Not currently dancing**

**Claremont Israeli Dancers (assoc):** Mon 7:00-10:00 Masonic Lodge, 272 W. 8th St, **CLAREMONT.** (909) 921-7115 Yael. www.meetup.com/israeli-folk-dancers/

**Desert Dancers:** Thu 7:00-9:00 Nov-April. Hi Desert Dance Center, 725 S. Gateway St, **RIDGECREST.** (760) 371-5669 Nora Nuckles

**Desert Int'l Folk Dancers(assoc):** Thu 3:00-5:00 Nov-Apr. Community Room, Mizell Center, 480 South Sunrise Way, **PALM SPRINGS.** (760) 342-1297 Helen Smith

**Friday Night L.I.F.E.(assoc):** Fri 8:00-11:00. LA DanceFit Studio, 10936 Santa Monica Blvd **WEST L.A.** worldance1@gmail.com Sherry Cochran. www.lifebalkandancers.com

**\*Foothill Folk Dancers:** Thu 8:00-10:00. Nourishing Spirits Center @ St. George's Episcopal Church, 808 Foothill Blvd., **LA CAÑADA** (818) 790-8523 JanRayman@charter.net www.Foothill.Dance

**\*Israeli Dancing @ AJU-Natalie & Pat:** Mon 10:30am-1:00, noon-1:00(Beg); Thu 10:30am-11:30. American Jewish Univ Dance Studio, 15600 Mulholland, **L.A** 818-642-3585 Pat Jordan

**Israeli Dancing-Yoni Carr:** Mon 7:00-11:30 Beginners at 7:00. Infinity Sport Dance Center, 4428 Convoy St, **SAN DIEGO.** (619) 227-0110 Yoni

**Kolo Festival(assoc):** Thanksgiving weekend. **San Francisco.** bill@kolofestival.org Bill Cope. kolofestival.org

**San Diego Folk Dancers:** Mon 7:00-9:00. Balboa Park, Balboa Park Club, 2144 Pan American Way, **SAN DIEGO.** 858-722-0489 Yueugenia@yahoo.com. Chin Yu

**Santa Barbara Balkan Folk Dancers:** Wed 8:00-10:00PM. Oak Park Stage, corner Junipero and Calle Real, **SANTA BARBARA.** soriasusan@gmail.com Susan Soria, or michalcathy@cox.net (805.895.4885) Michal Lynch

**Santa Barbara Int'l Folk Dancers:** In-person but schedule is in flux. Contact Michal Lynch for info michalcathy@cox.net, 805-895-4885.

**Southern Nevada Int'l FD:** Thu 4:00-6:00. Ballroom Addiction, 2301 Renaissance Dr., **Las Vegas, NV.** hugagiraffe@cox.net Eileen Hug

**UCLA Ballroom Club & UCLA Int'l Folkdancers:** Cultural, Historical & Ballroom: Thu 7-9. Kerckhoff Hall Room 135 **WESTWOOD.** RSVP required HistoricalDance@yahoo.com

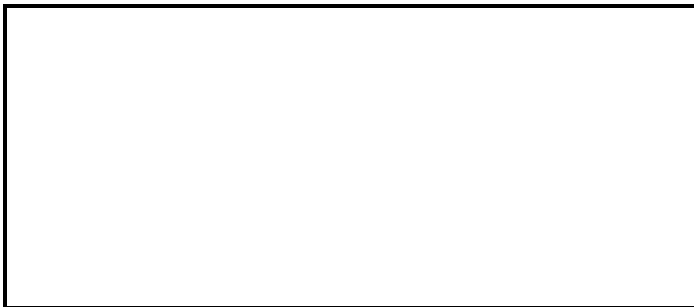
**\*Westside Daytime Folkdancers(assoc):** Wed 12:00 -2. Culver City Senior Center 4095 Overland Blvd, **Culver City.** 2nd & 4th Sat 7:00-8:30. Unitarian Universalist Church, 1260 18th St., **Santa Monica** sandysmail1000@gmail.com, (310) 391-7382 Sandy Helperin

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